



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**

**Planning and Community Development Department**  
**123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587-3225**  
**[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)**

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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** David Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Eric Shields, Planning Director  
Jeremy McMahan, Planning Supervisor

**Date:** December 13, 2007

**Subject:** DOWNTOWN CORRESPONDENCE

**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the Mayor to sign the attached response letters.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION**

The City has received the attached four items of correspondence related to downtown development.

Attachments:

1. Letter from David Wall
2. Letter from Brian & Sylvia Lindgren
3. Letter from Chuck Pilcher
4. Letter from Patricia Rice

-----Original Message-----

From: David Wall [<mailto:david.wall@myeastside.com>]

Sent: Monday, December 10, 2007 11:32 AM

To: KirklandCouncil

Cc: mrabaskin@comcast.net; Toni Wall

Subject: Downtown Kirkland building height and parking changes

Dear Kirkland City Council,

I have been a resident of Kirkland since 1990, and have run a small business in Kirkland since 1998. I am disturbed by the recent proposals to allow 5 story buildings with inadequate parking to be developed in downtown Kirkland.

There has been considerable development downtown in the past decade, and the feel is definitely moving towards congestion and imposing buildings that rob it of the very traits that have made it so desirable.

Please keep downtown Kirkland an attractive, open place to live and visit. Increasing the height limit and reducing downtown public parking should not be pursued.

Sincerely,  
David Wall

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David A. E. Wall  
724 17th Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033-4206  
Tel 425.822.8135

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**From:** Brian Lindgren [mailto:Brian.Lindgren@PACCAR.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 10, 2007 10:32 PM  
**To:** KirklandCouncil  
**Cc:** Sylvia Lindgren  
**Subject:** Downtown development - upcoming 11 Dec Council Mtg

Kirkland City Council:

I just learned that there are proposals on the table for buildings downtown with heights up to 5 stories. I'm strongly opposed to such increased heights in the downtown core. I would attend the meeting on 11 December to make my voice heard, but am out of town on business.

The allure of Kirkland is that it is a "walkable" city. This aspect has been noted in neighborhood study groups, open houses, and other forums. As we allow taller buildings, especially those with heights over two stories at the street, this aspect of our city is diminished. Taller buildings block sunlight and funnel breezes to create darker, windier sidewalks. Additionally, open areas such as the parking lot at Lake St. and Central Ave. and at the corner of Lake St. and Kirkland Ave. help keep an open feel to the city.

Additionally, as we have allowed condominiums to grow surrounding the downtown core, these have been sold with the expectation of a view over the downtown buildings. If we allow taller buildings downtown, the condo developers will ask to grow taller to regain view property, and soon we have a downtown like Bellevue's.

We live in Kirkland because of its smaller, walkable, community feel. We've lived within walking distance of downtown for over 25 years, and walk downtown often to eat or shop at the businesses in the downtown core. We feel that we would do this far less often if city becomes a less pleasant place to walk.

Please do not approve buildings in the downtown core above two stories at the street frontage, or above three stories total.

With best regards,

Brian and Sylvia Lindgren  
336 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue West

**From:** Chuck Pilcher [mailto:chuck@bourlandweb.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 11, 2007 8:44 PM  
**To:** KirklandCouncil  
**Subject:** Council Agenda/Building Heights

I saw that there's a debate about building heights in downtown. Here's my input:

I would like to see four major goals managed:

- 1) Building a downtown that takes advantage of our lakefront. This alone would improve the vitality and would not require big buildings.
- 2) Parking. Somehow we have to find a place for people to park once they get here. Even "off site parking" with a shuttle is an option, maybe even from the existing library parking. Can something be done in conjunction with the redevelopment of Park Place?
- 3) The property at Lake and Central. I have decided that that simply cannot be built on, and should probably be a park-like portion of a project to open up Lake Street in some way to Marina Park.
- 4) Retail stimulation on a year-round basis. I agree that the existing buildings are old and uninviting. With the constant turnover, my wife and I laugh about holding a lottery whenever a new business opens in the CBD. We see a new business and say to each other "I give that one six months." Or, "What in the world are they thinking?" Or, "Not another gallery/coffee shop/gift shop." Give me a hardware store and a bigger grocery store as a foundation, and build on that.

Building heights are less the issue than the usability and vitality of downtown. I don't think increasing height limits would achieve any of my desired goals above (but it will sure put money in the pockets of landowners). It would probably make it even less likely that we can open up Lake Street to the Lake. If we don't achieve the latter, let's just rename "Lake Street" and call it "Concrete Alley."

We have a great opportunity to do this right. Let's not lose our link to the biggest asset we have, the lake.

Feel free to forward to anyone who might care what I think.

Chuck Pilcher  
10127 NE 62nd Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
chuck@bourlandweb.com  
425-828-3165  
206-915-8593 cell

**From:** Patricia Rice [mailto:patmrice@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 11, 2007 7:50 PM  
**To:** KirklandCouncil  
**Cc:** Patricia Rice  
**Subject:** Development of Kirkland

City Council,

Today I received an e-mail with the information on the following proposals:

1. Bank of America development at Lake St and Kirkland Ave. 5 stories proposed with B of A and smaller retail at the bottom with 4 stories of Independent Senior residential above. They are asking for less than the required parking.
2. Merrill Gardens, the huge hole behind B of A will be 5 stories. Bottom floor retail and top 4 assisted living.
3. The McLeod proposal from Hectors to Calabria to Tully's. Four Stories, the bottom is retail with the top 3 office space. They are asking for less than the required amount of parking.
4. Park Place development.

I do not want Kirkland to be filled by 4 and 5 story buildings that require no setbacks from the side walks with little or no free parking. Kirkland has already lost a lot of it's charm and uniqueness with the the number of condos and hotels that have been built in the last few years. I continually get disgusted every time I see a building get torn down and then a new hotel or condo being built in it's place. This pattern continues throughout the neighborhoods, where houses are torn down and monster houses are built that fill up the entire lot. There needs to be a lot more restrictions on all the development. If it is not contained, we are at risk of losing the reason that people move to Kirkland.

I am not a condo owner. I moved to Kirkland 32 years ago and live in a house on 5th street east of market. I don't expect things to stay the same, but I would like to have some of the amenities back that have been lost over the years. When I moved here, there were 2 grocery stores, a hardware store, a pharmacy, a furniture store, a Ben Franklin store, a JC Penneys and some really nice small clothing stores. It was a pleasure to shop in Kirkland. Now, there is only 1 small grocery store that is of any use for day to day shopping. I am also concerned about the development of Park Place. I am skeptical that it is going to really benefit the community. Are we going to have to pay to go to the grocery store? Are there going to be more empty stores because store owners can't afford the rent? Are we going to have a hardware store and a pharmacy back in this development?

Unfortunately, I could not attend the meeting tonight, but I wanted you give some input on these proposals. I know a lot of my neighbors feel the same way.

Patricia Rice  
Concerned Kirkland Citizen.

January 2, 2008

**DRAFT**

David Wall  
724 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Downtown Building Heights and Parking

Dear Mr. Wall:

Thank you for your letter regarding building and parking in downtown Kirkland. We appreciate the concern you share, with all Kirkland residents, for the long term success of our downtown. In your letter, you note that building heights should not be increased. We can assure you that there are no proposals on the table for the City Council to consider increasing the allowed building heights. The current zoning and Comprehensive Plan policies for downtown building heights were last revisited in 1998 with a minor adjustment in 2001. The Zoning Code also requires that all new developments build enough parking to meet the demands of that development. We appreciate your concern about preserving the traits that make Kirkland desirable, which is why we have design guidelines and a Design Review Board to review new buildings in downtown. The downtown is changing as new development occurs, but we believe it is important that our downtown remain a vibrant and walkable part of our community.

Regarding your concern that public parking should not be reduced, we would note that in the past several years the City's Parking Advisory Board (PAB) has actually facilitated the addition of approximately 68 new public stalls on-street and in our public lots. The City Council has now asked the PAB to begin exploring opportunities for additional public supply in the downtown.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Jeremy McMahan at 425.587.3229.

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by James Lauinger  
Mayor

Cc: Jeremy McMahan, Planning Supervisor  
David Godfrey, Transportation Engineering Manager

January 2, 2008

**DRAFT**

Brian and Sylvia Lindgren  
336 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue West  
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Downtown Development

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lindgren:

Thank you for your letter regarding downtown development. We appreciate the concern you share, with all Kirkland residents, for the long term success and walkability of our downtown. Through extensive public process over many years, the City has adopted regulations and policies to guide development in downtown. We do not believe that creating a downtown like Bellevue's was the intent of the community in drafting these guiding documents and will not be the product. Our zoning, Comprehensive Plan, and Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts are intended to balance growth and change while preserving the characteristics that make our downtown so unique. Current development proposals will be reviewed by our Design Review Board for consistency with adopted policies and regulations.

One purpose of having these policies and regulations is to let property owners and neighbors know what the development potential is for property. It should be noted that City policy specifically does not protect private views, so the City would not entertain a rezone for the purpose of reclaiming views.

We would encourage you to participate in the design review process for upcoming downtown projects. If you have any additional questions, please contact Jeremy McMahan at 425.587.3229.

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by James Lauinger  
Mayor

Cc: Jeremy McMahan, Planning Supervisor

January 2, 2008

**DRAFT**

Chuck Pilcher  
10127 NE 62<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Downtown Building Heights

Dear Mr. Pilcher:

Thank you for your letter regarding the goals for downtown Kirkland. We appreciate your insights about the challenges and opportunities that we face in downtown and we will share them with the Downtown Advisory Committee for their consideration in updating the Downtown Strategic Plan.

In your letter, you mention increasing building heights. We can assure you that there are no proposals on the table for the City Council to consider increasing the allowed building heights.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Jeremy McMahan at 425.587.3229.

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by James Lauinger  
Mayor

Cc: Jeremy McMahan, Planning Supervisor



January 2, 2008

**DRAFT**

Patricia Rice  
1521 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033

RE: Downtown Development

Dear Ms. Rice:

Thank you for your letter regarding development in downtown Kirkland. We appreciate the concern you share, with all Kirkland residents, for the long term success of our downtown.

We share your desire to preserve the traits that make Kirkland desirable, which is why we have design guidelines and a Design Review Board to review new buildings in downtown. These are new buildings and downtown is changing, but we believe it is important that our downtown remain a vibrant and walkable part of our community. Staff will pass your comments along to the Design Review Board and Planning Commission for their consideration on the proposed development projects you mention.

The changes in downtown uses you mention are another challenge. They are driven largely by customers' shopping patterns. While the City has limited influence on those patterns, we share your desire that the downtown continue to provide some of the basic services for downtown and neighboring residents to minimize the need for driving to more distant locations.

Please note that the Parkplace proposal is currently under review and an Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared. There will be a number of upcoming meetings and public hearings as part of this proposal to amend the zoning and Comprehensive Plan. Please contact Angela Ruggeri at 425.587.3256 for specific meeting dates. If you have any additional questions, please contact Jeremy McMahan at 425.587.3229.

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by James Lauinger  
Mayor

Cc: Jeremy McMahan, Planning Supervisor